



WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS

State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development
Office of Economic Advisors

FOR NORTHWEST WISCONSIN COUNTIES

ASHLAND, BAYFIELD, BURNETT, DOUGLAS, IRON, PRICE, RUSK, SAWYER, TAYLOR, WASHBURN

February 2004

Seasonal job losses increase unemployment rates

Seasonal and holiday lay offs added to the number of those already unemployed in the region in January and pushed the unemployment rate for Northwest Wisconsin up to 8.3 percent. Prior to the recent round of lay offs the rate in December was 6.5 percent. Even with the latest surge, however, there are fewer unemployed than one year ago when the regional rate was 8.9 percent.

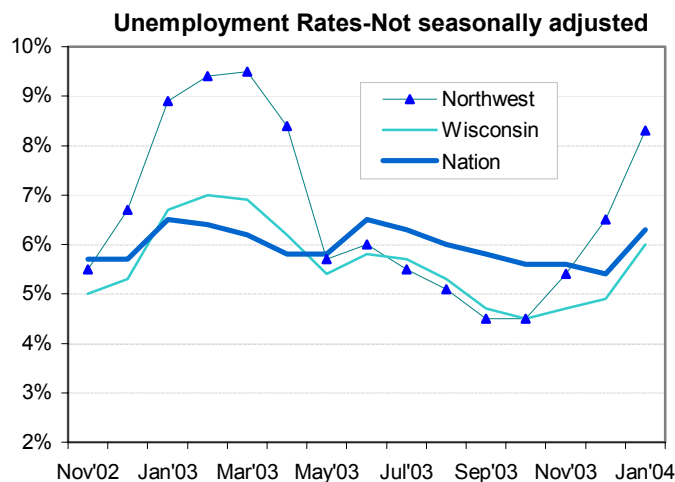
The latest influx of unemployed is reminiscent of previous years and the number of unemployed in the region will continue to rise. Unemployment in the state also followed a seasonal pattern but the swings were less dramatic.

The unemployment rate in the state rose to 6.0 percent in January while the national unemployment rate increased to 6.3 percent, not seasonally adjusted.

Unemployment rates increased in every county in the state in January but the greatest increase occurred in Rusk County where the rate rose from 7.6 percent in December to 11.2 percent in January. Three other northwestern counties reported increases greater than two percentage points. In Ashland County the rate rose from 7.2 percent in December to 9.5 percent in January, in Bayfield the rate rose from 7.6 to 9.8 percent and in Sawyer unemployment increased from 6.6 to 8.6 percent.

Unemployment rates rose from one to two percentage points in 47 counties including six in the northwest. In Douglas County the rate rose from 5.5 percent in December to 7.1 percent in January, in Taylor it increased from 6.5 to 7.9 percent, in Price the rate rose from 5.6 to 6.9 percent, in Iron it increased from 8.0 to 9.3 percent, in Burnett it rose from 5.8 to 7.0 percent, and in Washburn the rate increased from 7.7 percent in December to 8.9 percent in January.

In all counties the higher unemployment rates followed an increase in the number of unem-



| | Nov'02 | Dec'02 | Jan'03 | Nov'03 | Dec'03 | Jan'04 |
|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Northwest | 5.5% | 6.7% | 8.9% | 5.4% | 6.5% | 8.3% |
| Wisconsin | 5.0% | 5.3% | 6.7% | 4.7% | 4.9% | 6.0% |
| Nation | 5.7% | 5.7% | 6.5% | 5.6% | 5.4% | 6.3% |

Civilian Labor Force Estimates for Northwest Wisconsin counties: January 2004

| | Ashland | | | Bayfield | | | Burnett | | | Douglas | | | Iron | | |
|--------------|---------|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | Jan '04 | Dec '03 | Jan '03 | Jan '04 | Dec '03 | Jan '03 | Jan '04 | Dec '03 | Jan '03 | Jan '04 | Dec '03 | Jan '03 | Jan '04 | Dec '03 | Jan '03 |
| Labor force | 8,367 | 8,205 | 8,187 | 7,718 | 7,582 | 7,512 | 7,959 | 7,866 | 7,762 | 23,917 | 23,716 | 23,286 | 3,406 | 3,326 | 3,463 |
| Employed | 7,568 | 7,611 | 7,306 | 6,964 | 7,003 | 6,723 | 7,402 | 7,413 | 7,184 | 22,222 | 22,413 | 21,542 | 3,089 | 3,059 | 3,124 |
| Unemployed | 799 | 594 | 881 | 754 | 579 | 789 | 557 | 453 | 578 | 1,695 | 1,303 | 1,744 | 317 | 267 | 339 |
| % unemployed | 9.5 | 7.2 | 10.8 | 9.8 | 7.6 | 10.5 | 7.0 | 5.8 | 7.4 | 7.1 | 5.5 | 7.5 | 9.3 | 8.0 | 9.8 |

| | Price | | | Rusk | | | Sawyer | | | Taylor | | | Washburn | | |
|--------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|
| | Jan '04 | Dec '03 | Jan '03 | Jan '04 | Dec '03 | Jan '03 | Jan '04 | Dec '03 | Jan '03 | Jan '04 | Dec '03 | Jan '03 | Jan '04 | Dec '03 | Jan '03 |
| Labor force | 7,358 | 7,109 | 7,131 | 7,348 | 7,037 | 7,138 | 10,335 | 10,285 | 10,068 | 11,598 | 11,308 | 11,145 | 8,511 | 8,401 | 8,257 |
| Employed | 6,849 | 6,709 | 6,557 | 6,523 | 6,505 | 6,425 | 9,447 | 9,611 | 9,110 | 10,680 | 10,572 | 10,176 | 7,752 | 7,755 | 7,409 |
| Unemployed | 509 | 400 | 574 | 825 | 532 | 713 | 888 | 674 | 958 | 918 | 736 | 969 | 759 | 646 | 848 |
| % unemployed | 6.9 | 5.6 | 8.0 | 11.2 | 7.6 | 10.0 | 8.6 | 6.6 | 9.5 | 7.9 | 6.5 | 8.7 | 8.9 | 7.7 | 10.3 |

* not seasonally adjusted

Industry Employment Estimates for Northwest Wisconsin: Current month - January 2004

| (Employment in thousands) | Ashland | | | Bayfield | | | Burnett | | | Douglas | | | Iron | | |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|
| | Jan '04 | Dec '03 | Jan '03 | Jan '04 | Dec '03 | Jan '03 | Jan '04 | Dec '03 | Jan '03 | Jan '04 | Dec '03 | Jan '03 | Jan '04 | Dec '03 | Jan '03 |
| Total Nonfarm | 8.4 | 8.6 | 8.4 | 3.7 | 3.8 | 3.5 | 4.8 | 5.0 | 4.8 | 17.3 | 18.0 | 17.2 | 2.2 | 2.3 | 2.3 |
| Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.8 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.2 |
| Manufacturing | 1.2 | 1.3 | 1.2 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 1.0 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Trade | 1.0 | 1.1 | 1.0 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 3.1 | 3.2 | 3.0 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.4 |
| Transportation & Utilities | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Financial Activities | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Education & Health Services | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 1.9 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Leisure & Hospitality | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 2.0 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.4 |
| Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv. | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 2.9 | 3.1 | 2.9 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Total Government | 2.0 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 1.3 | 1.4 | 1.3 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 2.9 | 3.1 | 2.9 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.4 |
| | Price | | | Rusk | | | Sawyer | | | Taylor | | | Washburn | | |
| | Jan '04 | Dec '03 | Jan '03 | Jan '04 | Dec '03 | Jan '03 | Jan '04 | Dec '03 | Jan '03 | Jan '04 | Dec '03 | Jan '03 | Jan '04 | Dec '03 | Jan '03 |
| Total Nonfarm | 6.5 | 6.5 | 6.4 | 5.6 | 5.7 | 5.7 | 6.5 | 6.8 | 6.5 | 9.1 | 9.2 | 9.0 | 5.9 | 6.1 | 5.9 |
| Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.2 |
| Manufacturing | 2.3 | 2.4 | 2.3 | 1.9 | 1.9 | 2.0 | 0.4 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 2.9 | 2.9 | 2.9 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 1.0 |
| Trade | 0.9 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 0.9 |
| Transportation & Utilities | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| Financial Activities | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| Education & Health Services | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 0.9 |
| Leisure & Hospitality | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.8 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.6 |
| Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv. | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.7 | 0.8 | 0.7 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 1.1 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.4 |
| Total Government | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.3 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 2.1 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 1.1 | 1.0 | 1.1 | 1.4 | 1.5 | 1.4 |

Current month preliminary. Estimates based on March 2003 benchmark. Summing from unrounded numbers.

ployed and that added to a 1,800 increase in the region. In January there were 8,020 unemployed in Northwest Wisconsin but that was fewer than one year ago.

Claims for unemployment compensation benefits also declined last January. During the survey week (week including the 12th of the month) there were 4,814 claims filed for benefits compared with 4,964 in the same week last year. That number increases to 5,153 in February's survey week.

Many of those filing claims for benefits are seasonal workers or work in jobs that routinely lay off workers for a few weeks every winter. Those jobs are included in the losses in the industry employment series.

Total nonfarm jobs declined by 1,850 from December to January and every industry sector reported losses. The greatest reduction, nearly 500 jobs, occurred in construction. Compared to one year ago, however,

there are 400 more jobs with area employers. All industries, except manufacturing, show more jobs this year. The greatest increase in jobs in the last twelve months occurred with information, professional and business services. This group includes temporary help agencies (used by manufacturing firms) and telemarketers. The second greatest increase in jobs occurred with trade employers. All industries reported job losses since December.

With the release of January 2004 employment estimates comes the revision of all preliminary estimates for 2003. The revised estimates, included in the above table, are generally lower than the data released during 2003.

The revisions for 2003 brought a reduction of over 2,100 jobs in Northwest Wisconsin. Half of the revision occurred in the leisure and hospitality industry employment.

The greatest source of monthly employment estimates is the payroll report submitted by employers covered

Also revised: The list of Labor Surplus Areas for procurement bids from Oct. 1, 2003 - Sept. 30, 2004 now includes Ashland, Bayfield, Iron, Price, Rusk, and Washburn counties.

under Wisconsin Unemployment Insurance law. The department receives these reports only after the quarter ends, however. Once each year the nonfarm estimates are revised to reflect the payroll reports.

The current estimates are based on the reports submitted during the first six months of 2003 plus additional information provided by a survey of employers and methodologies for seasonal and temporary patterns.

2002 estimates were also revised during this annual 'benchmark' process but the differences were less significant. Anyone who tracks employment changes using this database should update their files by either contacting Beverly Gehrke (address below) or from www.dwd.state.wi.us/lmi/ces_industry_summaries.htm



Find the most current Labor Market Information at: WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI

Direct questions and comments to: **Beverly Gehrke, Labor Market Analyst**
 Hayward Job Center, 15618 Windrose Lane, Ste. 108, Hayward, Wisconsin 54843
 715-634-5289 715-634-6094(FAX) e-mail: Beverly.Gehrke@dwd.state.wi.us